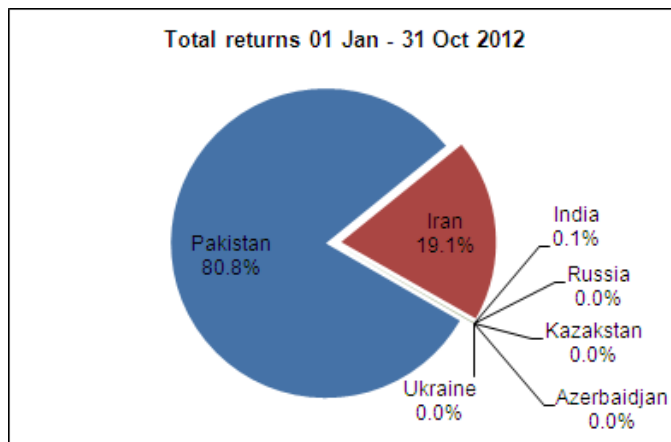


October 2012

VOLUNTARY RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN

1 – 31 October 2012: A total of 9,036 Afghans voluntarily repatriated from Pakistan (6,653) and Iran (2,383) during October. This reflects a decrease of 42% compared to the total number of returns (12,851) during September and a decrease of 5% compared to the 9,517 Afghans who returned during the same period in 2011. The decrease in return figures during October is largely due to the Eid-ul-Adhah holidays during which Afghan refugees generally prefer not to travel. Furthermore, return trends overall decrease starting in October as the cold season (fall and winter) starts in Afghanistan.



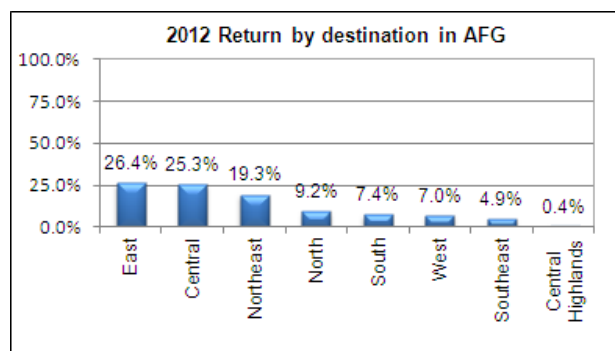
1 January – 31 October: During the first ten months of 2012, a total of 73,526 Afghans voluntary repatriated to Afghanistan of whom 59,423 came from Pakistan, 14,029 from Iran and 74 from NNCs (India: 44, Russian Federation: 11, Ukraine: 10, Kazakstan: 7 and Azerbaijan: 2). The average number of returns, per day in 2012, stands at 242 individuals reflecting an increase of 17% compared to the daily average of 207 individuals during the same period in 2011. Repatriation from Pakistan continued through three Voluntary Repatriation Centers (VRCs) located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Chamkani (Peshawar), Timergara (Dir), Bannu (Banu Township) and Baluchistan: Baleli (Quetta). Refugees wishing to repatriate from Iran refer to VRCs located in Soleimankhani, Esfahan, Shiraz, and Mashhad, the Sub-Offices, or directly to the Border Crossing Station (BCS) at Dogharoun. Returning refugees receive their assistance in one of five encashment centres upon return to Afghanistan: Mohmmad Dara (Nangarhar), Kabul (Kabul), Gardez (Paktya), Jamal Mayna (Kandahar) and Herat (Herat).

Afghanistan of whom 59,423 came from Pakistan, 14,029

Year	Returns from Pakistan	Returns from Iran	Returns from Other countries	Total
2002	1,565,066	259,792	9,679	1,834,537
2003	332,183	142,280	1,176	475,639
2004	383,321	377,151	650	761,122
2005	449,391	63,559	1,140	514,090
2006	133,338	5,264	1,202	139,804
2007	357,635	7,054	721	365,410
2008	274,200	3,656	628	278,484
2009	48,320	6,028	204	54,552
2010	104,331	8,487	150	112,968
2011	48,998	18,851	113	67,962
2012	59,423	14,029	74	73,526
Total	3,756,206	906,151	15,737	4,678,094

From the start of UNHCR’s assisted voluntary repatriation operation in March 2002 to the end of October 2012, over 5.7 million Afghan refugees have returned home, out of which over 4.6 million have repatriated with assistance from the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) and UNHCR through the voluntary repatriation (VolRep) programme. Today, returnees represent about a quarter of the country’s estimated population.

Assisted returns by region of destination in Afghanistan 2012 & 2011				
Region	No. of individuals returned - Comparison by year			
	2012		2011	
	No.	%	No.	%
East	19,392	26.4%	13,768	21.9%
Central	18,633	25.3%	21,381	33.9%
Northeast	14,159	19.3%	8,100	12.9%
North	6,799	9.2%	5,178	8.2%
South	5,471	7.4%	5,309	8.4%
West	5,175	7.0%	6,090	9.7%
Southeast	3,594	4.9%	2,685	4.3%
Central Highlands	303	0.4%	499	0.8%
Total	73,526	100.0%	63,010	100.0%





Kabul EC, Mine awareness briefing to returnees

Assisted return by area of residence in Country of Asylum (CoA) - 2012		
CoA	Province	%
PAKISTAN	KPK	60.8%
	Balochistan	21.3%
	Punjab	11.2%
	Sindh	5.2%
	Islamabad	1.0%
	AJK	0.4%
	Unknown	0.1%
IRAN	Tehran	18.6%
	Hormozgan	17.8%
	Kerman	16.0%
	Esfahan	11.2%
	Fars	10.0%
	Qom	5.7%
	Khorasan	5.4%
	Mazandaran	4.6%
	Yazd	3.3%
	Markazi	2.1%
	Semnan	1.6%
	Khuzestan	1.0%
	Bushehr	0.9%
	Qazvin	0.9%
	Golestan	0.6%
	Sistan va Baluchestan	0.1%
	Kohgiluyeh va Boyerahmad	0.0%
Lorestan	0.0%	
Unknown	0.0%	

ENCASHMENT CENTRE RETURNEE MONITORING

Between 1 January and 31 October 2012, a total of 3,613 interviews were conducted with returning refugees from Pakistan (3,373) and Iran (240). Interviewees were selected both randomly (2,971) and from among those returnees with evident protection concerns (642) at the first point of contact in Afghanistan at UNHCR Transit/Encashment Centres in Kabul, Jalalabad (Mohmand Dara), Kandahar (Jamal Mayna), Gardez and Herat (GTC). This monitoring exercise enables UNHCR to identify return trends, push/pull factors as perceived by the returning refugees and the level of information returnees received to enable them to make an informed decision on return.

Returns from Pakistan

Push factors

Among returnees from Pakistan, 68.6% cited economic factors as a primary reason for their return followed by the alleged harassment by authorities (10.7%), deteriorating security conditions in the country (9.8%), and fear of arrest and/or deportation (2.3%).

Pull factors

50.4% of returnees cited improvement of the security situation in some parts of Afghanistan as the primary reason influencing their decision to return followed by none or reduced fear of persecution (14.9%), UNHCR's assistance package (13.6%), employment opportunities (10.8%), the land allocation scheme and/or UNHCR shelter program (7.3%) and improvements in health and education facilities (1.9%).

Information on the Voluntary Repatriation Program

97.7% of the interviewed returnees from Pakistan reported that they had received adequate information to make an informed decision to return. Information was mainly obtained through the Afghan community (58.0%), visits to Afghanistan (29.3%) and through the media (4.9%). Regarding information on UNHCR's repatriation operation, 60.3% of the interviewed returnees explained that they had been informed about UNHCR's repatriation operation by members of the Afghan community, 16.2% reported that they obtained information directly from UNHCR, 12.6% stated that they had visited Afghanistan, whereas 10.4% were informed through the media (TV, Radio and Newspaper).

Alleged arrests/detentions and intimidations during stay in Pakistan

1.4% of the interviewed returnees alleged that they had been arrested and/or detained during their stay in Pakistan. Some 22.4% of interviewed returnees stated that they faced problems while traveling from the VRC to Torkham border point of whom 94.4% alleged that they had paid bribes at different check points in Pakistan because they were carrying livestock, construction material (used beams), or wished to avoid a search of the trucks.

Reasons for not returning to place of origin

Out of a total of 3,373 respondents, 1,013 returnees stated that they do not intend to repatriate to their place of origin due to the lack of housing (55.4%), insecurity (23.6%), lack of land (12.0%), lack of livelihood/income generation opportunities (4.6%), lack of public services (1.6%), personal disputes (1.2%) and other reasons (1.4%).

Returns from Iran

Push factors

Among the 240 returnees interviewed from Iran, 87.8% cited economic factors in Iran as the primary reason for return followed by fear of arrest and or deportation (7.1%) and alleged harassment by the authorities (3.8%).

Pull factors

93.2% cited improvements of the security situation in some parts of Afghanistan as the primary reason influencing their decision to return, followed by none or reduced fear of persecution (1.7%) and employment opportunities (1.7%).

Information on the Voluntary Repatriation Program

84.2% of the interviewed returnees from Iran reported that they had received adequate information to make an informed decision to return. Information was mainly obtained through the Afghan community (79.2%), directly from UNHCR (4.6%), through the media (2.9%) and other sources (5.4%). Regarding information on UNHCR's repatriation operation, 76.7% of the interviewed returnees stated that they have received information about UNHCR's repatriation operation by members of the Afghan community, 6.7% cited that they obtained information directly from UNHCR, through the media (2.9%) and 5.8% from other sources.

Reasons for not returning to place of origin

Out of a total of 240 respondents, 71 returnees stated that they do not intend to repatriate to their area of origin due to the following reasons: lack of public services (74.7%), lack of livelihoods / income generation opportunities (9.9%), lack of housing (8.5%), personal disputes (2.8%), fear of persecution (2.8%) and insecurity (1.3%).

BORDER MONITORING

Deportation of undocumented Afghan nationals (non-refugees)

Afghan nationals returning from Iran or Pakistan due to eviction, conflict, military operations, natural disasters, or other reasons do not fall under UNHCR's mandate, and all international response to their needs is led by IOM. However, UNHCR in co-ordination with other protection actors monitors their protection situation to ascertain that registered refugees are not deported.

IRAN

1 - 31 October 2012: A total of 24,961 (averaging 805 persons /day) undocumented Afghan nationals (non-refugees) were deported via Islam Qala (70%) and Zaranj (30%) border points. This figure is 15% higher compared to 21,759 deportees recorded in September 2012.

1 January – 31 October 2012 The total number of deportees has reached 216,082 individuals representing an increase of 26% compared to the same period last year during which 171,995 Afghans were deported from Iran. The average daily number of Afghans deported in 2012 stands at 708, compared to the daily average of 566 during the same period in 2011.

In 2011, a total number of 211,023 Afghans were deported from Iran showing an average of 578 persons per day. The vast majority of deportees (98%) were single men who entered Iran illegally looking for work.

Since April 2009, IOM has been present in Islam Qala and Zaranj border crossing points and has procedures in place to screen and identify PSNs (Persons with Specific Needs) among the deported undocumented Afghans (non-refugees). IOM provides PSNs with transportation, transit and health services at the border and to assist with their transportation costs from Herat and Zaranj cities to their final destination.

Reporting Period	Entry Point	Family Groups				Single					Total Individuals
		Families	Individuals			Male		Female		Total	
			M	F	Total	Adult	UAM	Adult	UAM		
01 - 31 Oct 2012	Zaranj	426	1,294	1,267	2,561	4,857	26	0	0	4,883	7,444
	Islam Qala	267	644	563	1,207	15,982	322	6	0	16,310	17,517
Total		693	1,938	1,830	3,768	20,839	348	6	0	21,193	24,961
01 Jan - 31 Oct 2012	Zaranj	1,732	4,450	4,857	9,307	59,007	309	0	0	59,316	68,623
	Islam Qala	1,212	2,754	2,287	5,041	138,977	3,340	87	14	142,418	147,459
Total		2,944	7,204	7,144	14,348	197,984	3,649	87	14	201,734	216,082

PAKISTAN

1 - 31 October 2012: A total of 339 undocumented Afghan nationals (non-refugees) were deported via Torkham (181) and Spin Boldak (158) border points. This figure reflects a sharp decrease compared to 1,207 deportees recorded in September 2012. The decrease in deportees figure during October is largely due to the Eid-ul-Adhah holidays.

1 January - 31 October 2012: A total of 1,428 undocumented Afghan nationals (non-refugees), including 14 families/54 individuals and 25 Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs) - were deported via Torkham Border. This figure is 21.5% higher compared to the 1,175 deportees recorded in the same period in 2011. Only five persons among the deported claimed to hold a Proof of Registration (PoR) card. These cases are being followed up by UNHCR Jalalabad.

IOM has taken steps to soon start screening, identifying and assisting PSNs among deported undocumented Afghans (non-refugees) in Torkham. The process would begin when those measures are fully in place.

In addition, 5,042 undocumented Afghan nationals (non-refugees) were deported via Spin Boldak (SB). The deportation figure for March to October this year (4,003) shows a decrease of 55% compared to the 6,190 Afghans deported during the same period in 2011. Border monitoring activities resumed in Spin Boldak in March 2011.

The total number of deportees from Pakistan in 2012 has reached 6,470 individuals representing a decrease of 14% compared to the same period last year during which 7,365 Afghans were deported.

Reporting Period	Entry Point	Family Groups				Single					Total Individuals
		Families	Individuals			Male		Female		Total	
			M	F	Total	Adult	UAM	Adult	UAM		
01 - 31 Oct 2012	Torkham	0	0	0	0	177	4	0	0	181	181
	Spin Boldak	0	0	0	0	158	0	0	0	158	158
Total		0	0	0	0	335	4	0	0	339	339
01 Jan - 31 Oct 2012	Torkham	14	28	26	54	1,349	25	0	0	1,374	1,428
	Spin Boldak	4	6	6	12	5,030	0	0	0	5,030	5,042
Total		18	34	32	66	6,379	25	0	0	6,404	6,470

UNHCR would like to extend its deep appreciation for the support and generous contribution of the following donors to its operation in Afghanistan 2012

